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~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~ACTION  
July 10, 1975

## MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM: Mr. Chitt

SUBJECT: President's Request for Analysis of Melvin Laird's  
Reader's Digest Article on Detente

With the memorandum at Tab II, Jim Connors informs the NSC that the President read Melvin Laird's article "Is This Detente?" in the July issue of Reader's Digest and asked "Would you have someone analyze this -- point by point -- and give me answers."

The memorandum for your signature to the President at Tab I would respond to the President's request. Drawing on materials made available at our request by other members of the Staff and by CIA, your memorandum would analyze the allegations of Soviet misbehavior made by Mr. Laird and would then lift the discussion of detente from that context to a broader level to review your perception of detente, U. S. expectations of the policy and whether the results have been in our interest.

A copy of the article is at Tab A.

Bill Stearman, Bob Oakley and Jan Lodal's staff concur.

## RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memorandum for the President at Tab I.

RGates:nw:7/10/75

NSS review  
completed.State Dept Review  
Completed~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~  
XGDS

OSD review completed

MORI/CDF pages 2-9  
per C03214804

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## MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Mel Laird's Reader's Digest Article "Is This Detente?"

You have asked for a point by point analysis of Mel Laird's article "Is This Detente?" (at Tab A) in the July issue of Reader's Digest. To recap the article briefly, Mr. Laird argues that the United States has made major concessions to the Soviet Union to help defuse world powder kegs that could explode into war. He states that in recent months the USSR has repeatedly committed deliberate acts that mock detente and threaten the free world. He asserts that we must shed any lingering illusions that detente means the Russians have abandoned their determination to undermine Western democracy and impose their system upon the world and concludes that the U. S. must no longer tolerate the use of detente as a one-way street. To substantiate these conclusions, he alleges -- with supporting data -- that the Soviet Union:

-- 1) has violated agreements to limit strategic weapons;

-- 2) has actively assisted North Vietnam in making a shambles of the Paris peace accords and overrunning South Vietnam;

-- 3) has reneged on its promise to guarantee unimpeded civilian access to West Berlin;

-- 4) is abetting terrorism and guerrilla warfare in the Middle East;

-- 5) is sponsoring a massive campaign in Portugal to impose a communist regime subservient to the Kremlin;

-- 6) has engaged in a relentless effort to attain military supremacy.

A review of these allegations follows:

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1) The USSR has violated agreements to limit strategic weapons. Mel Laird asserts that the Soviets have tested radars for ABM use in a manner prohibited by the SALT agreements and charges that they may be developing an ABM system endowing them with significant strategic advantage. Additionally, he accuses the USSR of violating SALT understandings by increasing the size of Soviet ICBMs.

As you know, we believe that the Soviets are not in violation of any provisions of any of the SALT agreements. Ambiguities which have arisen relate principally to the issues of treaty language and the acknowledged inability to write treaty language that will unambiguously deal with all activities which could take place during the period of the agreement.

The radar testing issue is in fact one of the ambiguous problems we have raised with the Soviets

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there has been no testing of the SA-5 radar against incoming RV's since February 28. On this basis, we have indicated we consider the matter closed. The apparent resolution of this issue was a specific accomplishment

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With respect to the characterization of the SS-19 as a heavy missile and therefore a violation of the Interim Agreement, the two sides never agreed on a definition of a "heavy" ICBM in SALT I. The U.S. issued a unilateral statement on May 26, 1972, which said we "would consider any ICBM having a volume or throwweight significantly greater than that of the largest light ICBM now operational on either side to be a heavy ICBM." However, the United States never clarified to the Soviets what we meant by "significantly" and, in any event, the Soviets flatly rejected our unilateral statement. Under these circumstances, we have very little legal basis for claiming a violation based upon the volume of the SS-19. The United States has urged the Soviets to lay the groundwork for a more precise distinction between "light" and "heavy" ICBMs in the next agreement.

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2) The Soviet Union actively assisted North Vietnam in making a shambles of the Paris peace accords and overrunning South Vietnam. According to Laird, by continuing to supply the North Vietnamese with offensive war materiel beyond prescribed limitations the Soviets played a direct role in sabotaging the agreements. He states that the Soviets and Chinese provided Hanoi with \$2.5 billion worth of aid after the ceasefire, including Soviet shipment of 115 modern tanks and armored vehicles, 300 tactical missiles and 1100 big military trucks.

These figures for post-ceasefire Soviet deliveries are consistent with [redacted]

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25X1 [redacted] However, most of the \$2.5 billion in Soviet and Chinese post-ceasefire aid was economic, not military.

Whether Hanoi would have moved militarily in the South without Soviet aid is uncertain. It is perhaps significant, however, that in 1974, China provided Hanoi with twice as much aid as did the USSR, thus suggesting that a decline in Soviet aid likely would largely have been made up by the Chinese.

3) The Soviet Union has reneged on its promise to guarantee unimpeded civilian access to West Berlin. The Laird article correctly states that under the Quadripartite Agreement which became effective in June 1972, the Soviets pledged to ensure that the flow of people and goods through East Germany to West Berlin would not be obstructed. It claims that from July to October, 1974, the Communists deliberately and repeatedly stalled cars and trucks en route through East Germany.

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[redacted] the Soviets have imposed and will impose selective controls on access when they believe the Western powers have gone too far in permitting closer ties between West Germany and West Berlin. The nature and extent of West Berlin's ties to West Germany is the most controversial part of the Quadripartite Agreement and access difficulties last year revolved around this issue -- specifically the FRG's plan to open a federal environmental protection office in West Berlin.

On two week-ends in late January and early February, 1974, the East Germans blocked ground access to West Berlin and subjected travelers to searches and strict controls. The Soviets made clear that the action was taken to protest the establishment of the environmental office in Berlin. The stoppages quickly ceased once the Soviets had made clear that their

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commitment to unimpeded travel to West Berlin would not bar the use of access controls as a lever against efforts to strengthen ties between the city and the FRG.

Again, in July 1974, the East Germans announced their intention to bar environmental office employees and goods from land access to West Berlin. Interference continued for a week and then stopped because of Western protests. Since the environmental office dispute, [REDACTED] that transit traffic has been undisturbed.

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4) The Soviet Union is abetting terrorism and guerrilla warfare in the Middle East. Mel Laird states that the Soviets are training hundreds of young Arab terrorists in Syria, that they have supplied Libya with SA-7 missiles @addafi has then turned over to terrorists, that they have supported a guerrilla war on the Arab peninsula in Oman with a view to eventually gaining control of and cutting off Persian Gulf oil to the West.

The Soviets have provided military training for several hundred Palestinians both in the USSR and Syria. [REDACTED]

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The Soviets for several years have given political and limited military assistance to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO). [REDACTED]

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5) In Portugal, the Soviet Union is sponsoring a massive campaign to impose a communist regime subservient to the Kremlin. The article asserts that the Soviet Union has clandestinely provided the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) with at least \$40 million and that with secret Soviet aid the Party has gained control of the national labor movement and is exploiting the press to spread anti-American propaganda.

[redacted] 25X1  
source of the considerable funds -- as much as all other parties combined -- spent by the Portuguese Communist Party in the April 1975 election. Published estimates of the Party's campaign chest range from \$15-50 million. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1  
6) The Soviet Union has engaged in a relentless effort to attain military supremacy. This assertion is fundamentally one of interpretation of Soviet military programs in recent years and the intentions driving those programs. The judgment of the U. S. intelligence community on this issue in the National Intelligence Estimate "Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Conflict Through 1985" is as follows:

"We doubt that the Soviets have firmly settled on acceptance of strategic parity or have decided to seek clear-cut strategic superiority. The concept of superiority in Soviet military doctrine is ill-defined and is probably contested. In making the practical

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choices they confront, however, we believe that the Soviet leadership is pursuing a strategic policy which is both prudent and opportunistic -- a policy aimed at assuring no less than comprehensive equality with the U. S. and at the same time seeking to attain a margin of strategic advantage if U. S. behavior permits. "

Response: The information and analysis above, together with other intelligence, suggest the following conclusions:

-- The Soviet Union has complied with both the strategic arms agreements and the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin;

-- The Soviet Union is pursuing a very active strategic program, but one that cannot secure for it a margin of strategic advantage unless we let down our guard;

-- Developments troublesome to us in Portugal are due primarily to internal Portuguese considerations rather than to Soviet interference, although the Soviets undoubtedly have given financial support to the Portuguese community;

-- Events this spring in Indochina can be traced in substantial measure to circumstances in South Vietnam and to inadequate U. S. responses. It would have been unrealistic to expect the USSR and China to abandon an ally;

-- While providing arms to Palestinian groups in the Middle East, there is substantial evidence that the Soviets have also tried to exert a moderating influence upon the Palestinian resistance movement and has not pursued a spoiling policy in response to our efforts to reach a settlement in the area.

The larger issue raised by Mel Laird's article, however, concerns the nature of detente, what we expect to gain by such a policy, and whether the policy is in our national interest.

Detente is not a permanent achievement but a process, a continuing search for a more constructive relationship with the Soviet Union reflecting the imperative to avoid thermonuclear warfare and the reality that there can be no peaceful international order without a lessening of tensions and a relationship based on mutual respect and restraint between the United States and the Soviet Union. Because the two powers have different social systems with

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different values and different objectives, this effort to ease tensions and promote a constructive relationship must continue. Detente, then, is an evolutionary policy aimed at creating an environment in which the two countries can regulate and restrain our differences, and wherever possible, move from competition to cooperation.

As a result of this policy, major progress has been made to reduce the danger of war and to encourage new patterns of relations and international conduct:

-- Berlin's potential as Europe's perennial flash point has been substantially reduced through the Quadripartite agreement of 1971.

-- We have achieved unprecedented agreements in arms limitation and measures to avoid accidental war, with the prospect that more far-reaching strategic arms limitations may be concluded this year.

-- Many incipient crises with the Soviet Union have been contained or settled without ever reaching the point of public disagreement. The world has been freer of East-West tensions and conflict than in the fifties and sixties.

-- A series of bilateral cooperative agreements have turned the US-USSR relationship in a more positive direction.

-- We and our allies are engaged in negotiations, now nearly complete, with the Warsaw Pact and other countries in the European Conference on Security and Cooperation, the final documents of which will foster East-West dialogue and cooperation and also provide a useful benchmark for judging future Soviet and East European performance in the area of human rights.

-- NATO and the Warsaw Pact are negotiating the reduction of their forces in Central Europe.

These accomplishments do not guarantee peace. But they have served to lessen the rigidities of the past and offer hope for a better era. The character of international politics has been markedly improved.

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With these accomplishments and first steps toward a constructive relationship with the Soviet Union, however, there has developed a tendency in some quarters in the United States to believe that demands can now be made on the Soviet Union to alter its internal policies, and to curtail (if not abandon altogether) its political, philosophical and military competition with us. Mel Laird's article is an example of this tendency.. Such views are incompatible with our perception and understanding of detente, its limits and its fragility. This perception is based on certain realities:

-- The Soviet Union will not forego its political competition with the United States in contested parts of the world such as the Middle East, Asia, and in newly radicalized countries such as Portugal.

-- The Soviet Union will not voluntarily or unilaterally curtail its weapons programs.

-- The Soviet Union will not alter its internal policies under public pressure from the West. Beyond certain modest (and superficial) steps, we cannot realistically expect liberalization of Soviet internal policies.

While the Soviet Union will not forego political competition with the West around the world, it is in U. S. interests to continue working to bring the Soviets to understand that their interests -- including those aspects of our bilateral relationship of special importance to them -- are best served by restraining and regulating that competition and will be jeopardized if they do not act accordingly.

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All over the world, the Soviet Union is  
callously and consistently ignoring agreements  
with the United States that were designed  
to reduce tensions. Here is  
the sobering scorecard

## IS THIS DÉTENTE?

By MELVIN R. LAIRD

OVER THE past several years, the United States has made major concessions and numerous gestures of goodwill to induce the Soviet Union to help defuse world powder kegs that could explode into war. We still hope that such efforts will eventually succeed. Certainly, everyone hopes to avoid renewal of Cold War confrontations. But it would be dangerously foolish to confuse hope with reality. Therefore, I am now persuaded that the American people ought to be told some unpleasant facts about the true status of détente, so that they can intelligently judge the Kremlin's current intentions.

The facts are that, in recent months, the U.S.S.R.—secretly and

openly—has repeatedly committed deliberate acts that mock détente and threaten the free world. Let's look at six deeply troubling actions:

1. *The U.S.S.R. has violated agreements to limit strategic weapons.*

On May 26, 1972, the United States and the Soviet Union concluded two important arms agreements. One treaty strictly limits both countries in their future development of anti-ballistic-missile systems. A vital component of any such system is powerful, sophisticated radar that tracks incoming missiles. Article VI of that treaty explicitly forbids testing any radar for ABM use. Yet our government now possesses evidence that the Russians have conducted radar tests specifically forbidden by the treaty. The Russians have not disputed our intelligence, but have insisted that the tests were for "safety or instrumentation" purposes only. The disingenuousness

of this reply cannot conceal the fact that the Russians have cheated on the treaty and may be developing an ABM system that would endow them with a significant strategic advantage.

The second accord limits the United States and the Soviet Union to approximately the same number of nuclear delivery systems. Critical to this SALT I agreement was the clear American understanding that neither side would appreciably increase the size of its intercontinental ballistic missiles—for larger missiles could carry more warheads and render the limitation on numbers meaningless. Now reconnaissance and other reliable sources have provided incontrovertible proof that the Soviets have cheated on this understanding. In some 50 silos, they have installed new missiles called the SS19, 50-percent bigger than most of their previous rockets. Deployed in large numbers, the SS19 will give the Soviet Union the capability to destroy our land-based missiles and bombers in a surprise attack. Six years ago, we and the Russians could deliver nuclear warheads of about the same destructive force. Today the Soviets can outfire us in destructive power by two-to-one.

2. *The Soviet Union actively assisted North Vietnam in making a shambles of the Paris peace accords and overrunning South Vietnam.*

At Paris in January 1973, the North Vietnamese pledged to re-

spect South Vietnam's right to determine its own political future. They pledged not to send more troops and arms into South Vietnam. Both pledges were promptly broken. The Russians, by continuing to supply North Vietnam with offensive war matériel beyond prescribed limitations, played a direct role in the treaty's sabotage. (We sent less matériel to South Vietnam than the treaty allowed, and all of it was demonstrably for defense.)

After the ceasefire, the Russians and Chinese poured into North Vietnam aid conservatively valued at \$2.5 billion. Among Soviet shipments: 115 modern tanks and armored vehicles, 300 tactical missiles, 1100 big military trucks. Such equipment was for one purpose only: renewed military attacks in violation of the Paris accords. And when the North's offensive began in the spring of 1974, Soviet tanks spearheaded it.

3. *The Soviet Union has reneged on its promise to guarantee unimpeded civilian access to West Berlin.*

Ever since the Cold War began with the Berlin blockade in 1948, the Russians have employed stratagem after stratagem to strangle West Berlin economically, isolate it politically and capture it for themselves. In June 1972, we signed a pact with the Russians to ease the situation there. With Britain and France, we agreed to allow the Russians to establish a consulate in West Berlin and, at about the same time, to support United Nations membership for

MELVIN R. LAIRD, former Congressman from Wisconsin (1953-1969) and Secretary of Defense (1969-1973), is The Reader's Digest's Counsellor for National and International Affairs.

East Germany. The Soviets in turn pledged to ensure that the flow of people and goods through East Germany to West Berlin would not be obstructed.

However, once the consulate opened and East Germany was in the U.N., the Russians broke their word. From July to October last year, the communists deliberately—and repeatedly—stalled cars and trucks en route through East Germany. The latest treaty notwithstanding, the Russians still seem to look upon West Berlin as a hostage.

4. *The Soviet Union is abetting terrorism and guerrilla warfare in the Middle East.*

In Syria, East Germany and the Soviet Union itself, communist agents are training hundreds of young Arabs in the techniques of terror. The Russians have supplied to Libya's dictator, Muammar el-Qaddafi, deadly SA-7 heat-seeking missiles that can home in on the jet engines of commercial airliners. Predictably, Qaddafi has turned these portable weapons over to terrorists, allowing some to be shipped in diplomatic pouches. In September 1973, Italian police captured five terrorists armed with SA-7s on an apartment balcony near Rome's airport, poised to shoot down a Boeing 747. But the attempts go on.

And Russia continues to sustain a little-noticed but sinister guerrilla war on the strategic Arabian peninsula. The immediate Soviet target is the Sultanate of Oman, perched on the narrow Strait of Hormuz.

Through this strait pass 17 million barrels of petroleum daily, bound for Japan and Western Europe. At camps maintained in neighboring South Yemen, Russians supervise guerrilla training of Omani tribesmen. Armed with Soviet weapons, the tribesmen raid the countryside—their avowed aim (despite almost total lack of support among the people of Oman) being to win a "war of national liberation" in support of Soviet policy. Such control would enable Russia to cut at will half of Western Europe's supply of oil and three fourths of Japan's.

5. *In Portugal, the Soviet Union is sponsoring a massive campaign to impose a communist regime subservient to the Kremlin.*

The strategic location of Portugal makes it a key member of NATO. In April 1974, a coup ousted Portugal's right-wing dictator, Marcello Caetano, and hope arose that the country might peacefully transform itself into a democracy. However, with the coup, the communists sprang out of hiding as the country's best-organized and richest political party, even though the recent advisory election indicated that they had the backing of only about 13 percent of the people. But they did have the backing of the Soviet Union, which, in the past 12 months, has clandestinely provided them with at least \$40 million to pay party workers and hire street demonstrators to intimidate the opposition. With secret Soviet aid, the communist minority has gained control of the national labor

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education and is capturing the press to spread virulent anti-American propaganda. Opponents to communism are still being purged from key government and military posts, to be replaced by communists and their sympathizers.

Absorption of Portugal into the Soviet empire would expose Spain to subversion, cost NATO indispensable bases in the Azores, open up the Atlantic to Soviet submarines, and fundamentally alter the world balance of power.

6. *The Soviet Union has engaged in a relentless effort to attain military supremacy.*

In the last six years, the United States has reduced its armed forces by 1.4 million men and women, cut the Army in half and lowered the number of Navy combat ships to the level of the year 1939. In constant dollars, we have slashed our military spending by 34 percent. This year, the defense budget will consume only 5.8 percent of the gross national product—the smallest percentage since 1950.

Yet our disarmament overtures have brought an increase in Soviet military allocations. Although the Russian economy has less than half our productive capacity, the Soviets are currently outspending us by 20 to 25 percent in every significant defense category. Their 4.2 million troops now outnumber our forces by more than two-to-one.

Meanwhile, we have granted the Russians long-term unsecured loans at interest rates below what the American home buyer, farmer, businessman or government must pay. And the Soviets continue to seek further credit, technology and other help from us. This adds up to a situation in which we subsidize the U.S.S.R.'s faltering civilian economy so that it can afford to mount an enormous arms buildup. For example, American engineers and money help construct in Russia the world's largest truck factory—and the Kremlin ships trucks to North Vietnam to help crush South Vietnam.

Clearly, we must shed any lingering illusions we may have that détente means the Russians have abandoned their determination to undermine Western democracy and impose their system upon the world. We must communicate to the Russians that the only alternative to mutual arms reduction is an American rearmament that would doom them to permanent military inferiority. We must show them that we will no longer tolerate the use of détente as a Russian one-way street.

In forthcoming issues, The Reader's Digest will examine strategic double spots and discuss further how to deal with the Russian challenge.

For information on reprints of this article, see page 18

If you do not think about the future, you cannot have one. —John Galworthy

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 30, 1975

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM:

JIM CONNOR 

The attached copy of the July 1975 issue of the READER'S DIGEST was returned in the President's Outbox with the following notation regarding the article on page 54 by Melvin R. Laird:

"Would you have someone analyze this -  
point-by-point - and give me answers."

Please follow-up with appropriate action.

cc: Don Rumsfeld